



consumer news

Office of Consumer Affairs
Executive Office of the President · Virginia H. Knauer, Director

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President gets consumer views on new economic policy

President Nixon invited the 12-member **Consumer Advisory Council** and 8 other consumer leaders to the White House in September to get their views about the administration's program for wage and price stabilization. It was the first time any President had met with substantial consumer organizations in a working session. He asked them about the impact of the wage-price freeze on consumers and sought their advice for policies to be implemented in Phase 2 of the new economic policy. Participants in addition to the council were Donald Livingston of California's Consumer Affairs Dept.; Foster J. Pratt of American Association of Retired Persons; Mrs. Lucille H. Shriver of National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs; Joseph Smith of Neighborhood Consumer Information Center; James Sullivan of National Retired Teachers Association; Thomas G. Walters of National Association of Retired Civil Employees; Colston E. Warne of Consumers Union; Don S. Willner of Consumers Federation of America. The President also consulted last month with representatives of Congress, industry, labor and agriculture about the effect of the freeze and the future direction for curbing inflation and reducing unemployment.

The **Cost of Living Council** is now developing policies for the economic program's Phase 2, which will begin when the freeze ends midnight Nov. 13. Virginia Knauer, Director of **Office of Consumer Affairs**, is a member of the council. To represent consumers better at the council's policy meetings, Mrs. Knauer has sent telegrams to 125 consumer organizations and individuals asking for their views on the economy.

New members appointed to advisory council

President Nixon has appointed 3 new members to his **Consumer Advisory Council** for two-year terms: Gary Nelson, Arizona Attorney General; Mrs. Oscar Sowards of Kentucky Citizen's Commission for Consumer Protection; Solomon Harge of Cleveland's Consumer Protection Association. The President also reappointed 3 for two-year terms: Jacob Clayman of AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Dept.; Dr. Stewart Lee Richardson Jr. of Louisiana State University; Dr. Wilma T. Donahue, former Co-Director of Institute of Gerontology, University of Michigan.

Continuing members of the council are Dr. Carmen P. Busquets of University of Puerto Rico; George A. Johnson of Boston English High School; Dr. Stewart Lee of Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pa.; Dr. Jean Mayer of Harvard University; Mrs. Janet Rathe of Oregon Consumers League; and Mrs. Eunice P. Howe, former Assistant Attorney General of Massachusetts. Mrs. Howe continues as council Chairman; Virginia Knauer, Director of **Office of Consumer Affairs**, is Executive Secretary.

ICC wants consumer opinion of moving companies

Interstate Commerce Commission is seeking more information about the quality of service of the nation's household moving firms. To get the consumer's opinion, the commission has issued a questionnaire with its Public Advisory No. 3. The advisory deals with problems encountered in moving and lists the addresses and telephone numbers of ICC's 80 field offices, which you may contact for assistance. If the company moving your furniture does not volunteer to give you a copy of the advisory and questionnaire, you may get one by contacting an ICC field office or by writing to Interstate Commerce Commission, Washington, D.C. 20423.

How consumers can report to FDA

Sometimes you may come across a food, drug, device or cosmetic that you have reason to believe is mislabeled, unsanitary or harmful. You should report a legitimate complaint or grievance to the **Food & Drug Administration**. FDA cannot take action solely on the basis of your complaint, but it will investigate serious legitimate complaints and act in accordance with the requirements of the law if it determines a law has been violated. Information you provide can lead to the detection and correction of a violation of the Federal Food, Drug & Cosmetics Act or the Hazardous Substance Act.

Here are some guidelines to follow in reporting suspected violations of food, drug, cosmetic and hazardous-substance laws:

1. Report your complaint promptly by writing or calling the nearest FDA regional office; give your name, address and telephone number.
2. State clearly what appears to be wrong. Describe the product's label and give any code marks that appear.
3. Give the name and address of the store where you bought the product and when.
4. Save whatever remains of the suspicious product or the product's container. Keep any unopened container of the product bought at the same time.
5. Report the suspicious product to the manufacturer, packer or distributor named on the label and to the store where you bought it.

If you want detailed information about the work of FDA, laws and regulations enforced by it and its information about food, drugs, cosmetics and hazardous substances, write to Office of Consumer Affairs, Food & Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20852.

Regional FDA offices in 17 cities

ATLANTA: 60 Eighth St., N.E.

Atlanta, Ga. 30309

Tel. 404—526-5265

BALTIMORE: 900 Madison Ave.

Baltimore, Md. 21201

Tel. 301—962-3396

BOSTON: 585 Commercial St.

Boston, Mass. 02109

Tel. 617—223-3174

BUFFALO: 599 Delaware Ave.

Buffalo, N.Y. 14202

Tel. 716—842-6904

CHICAGO: Main Post Office Building

Rm 1222/433 Van Buren St.

Chicago, Ill. 60607

Tel. 312—353-5863

CINCINNATI: 1141 Central Pkwy.

Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Tel. 513—684-3503

DALLAS: 3032 Bryan St.

Dallas, Tex. 75204

Tel. 214—749-2735

DENVER: New Customhouse Bldg.

Rm. 5604/20th & California Sts.

Denver, Colo. 80202

Tel. 303—297-4335

DETROIT: 1560 E. Jefferson Ave.

Detroit, Mich. 48207

Tel. 313—226-6262

KANSAS CITY: 1009 Cherry St.

Kansas City, Mo. 64106

Tel. 816—374-5521

LOS ANGELES: 1521 W. Pico Blvd.

Los Angeles, Calif. 90015

Tel. 213—688-3771

MINNEAPOLIS: 240 Hennepin Ave.

Minneapolis, Minn. 55401

Tel. 612—725-2121

NEW ORLEANS: U. S. Customhouse

Rm. 222/423 Canal St.

New Orleans, La. 70130

Tel. 504—527-2401

NEW YORK: Rm. 700/850 3rd Ave.

Brooklyn, N. Y. 11232

Tel. 212—788-5000 ext. 1300

PHILADELPHIA: U.S. Customhouse

Rm. 1204/2nd & Chestnut Sts.

Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Tel. 215—597-4390

SAN FRANCISCO: Federal Office Bldg.

Rm. 518/50 Fulton St.

San Francisco, Calif. 94102

Tel. 415—556-2062

SEATTLE: Federal Office Bldg.

Rm. 5003/909 First Ave.

Seattle, Wash. 98104

Tel. 206—583-5304

• Standards proposed for orange beverages

Nov. 7 is deadline for filing comments on three proposals being considered by **Food & Drug Administration** for establishing definitions and standards for how much real orange juice should be used in different kinds of orange beverages. FDA may adopt one of the proposals or a combination of the three to insure that consumers know what percentage of orange juice they are getting for their money.

FDA has proposed the following categories of orange drinks: (1) blended orange-juice drink—containing not less than 70% orange juice; (2) orange-juice drink—containing not less than 35% orange juice; (3) orange drink or orangeade—containing less than 35% orange juice but not less than 10%; (4) orange-flavored drink—containing less than 10% orange juice but not less than 2%.

National Juice Products Association has proposed slightly different categories: (1) orange blend—containing not less than 70% orange juice; (2) orange-juice drink—containing not less than 35% orange juice; (3) orange drink—containing not less than 10% orange juice; (4) orange-flavored drink—containing not less than 2% orange juice; (5) noncarbonated flavored beverages—containing less than 2% orange juice.

Florida Canners Association has proposed: (1) orange drink—containing not less than 10% orange juice; (2) orange-flavored drink—containing not less than 2% orange juice; (3) noncarbonated flavored beverages—containing less than 2% orange juice. (For details, see Federal Register, Sept. 9, page 18098 or FDA document, Certain Juice Products: Proposals Regarding Stated Identity Standards.)

Send 5 copies of comments to Hearing Clerk, Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare, Room 6-62, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20852.

OCA seeks better means of comparing life insurance

Virginia Knauer, Director of **Office of Consumer Affairs**, is prodding the nation's life insurance industry to act on the recommendations made in May 1970 by the industry's own Joint Special Committee on Life Insurance Costs—recommendations aimed at providing consumers with more objective means of comparing net costs of various cash-value life insurance policies. The committee's report endorsed a method of cost comparison (the interest-adjusted method) that would take into account the fact that the consumer's premium dollars (and any dividend dollars paid by a company) accumulate compound interest if held in an interest-bearing account. The traditional "net cost" method used by companies for comparing cash-value policies ignores interest altogether.

The net cost based on the traditional method often varies substantially from the net cost as computed under the interest-adjusted method. To get a better understanding of the cost of insurance policies that you are considering, you should ask salesmen to give you figures based on both methods. Of course, you also should compare the provisions of individual policies and services of the agent and company in deciding which is the most economical policy.

Goat meat also may be called 'chevon'

Agriculture Dept. has amended its regulations to permit goat meat to be labeled as either goat meat or "chevon," the Spanish word for goat meat. The original proposal (see **CONSUMER NEWS**, April 1971) would have permitted goat meat to be labeled as chevon and/or mutton instead of goat meat. Agriculture received a total of 146 written comments: 64 from consumers—58 opposing the change; 82 from industry, government and education—40 in opposition.

Agency permits monthly distribution of earnings on savings accounts

Federal Home Loan Bank Board has amended its regulations for savings and loan associations within the Federal Savings & Loan System. These S&L's now are permitted to distribute earnings on certain savings accounts on a monthly basis as of the last day of each month or last business day of each month. However, monthly distribution is optional. S&L's may continue to distribute earnings quarterly on the last calendar or business day of March, June, September and December. Federal S&L regulations do not apply to S&L's chartered by state agencies.

Government product information for consumers

U.S. Army Natick Laboratories has released a pilot report showing that government specifications and related technical documents contain information of potential use to consumers. The report, which has been given to the **Office of Consumer Affairs**, states: "Because of the narrow orientation of government specifications [for consumer products] . . . information useful to consumers may be quite limited . . . [and] rather fragmentary . . . Some of the information produced, while useful to the consumer, would not be directly usable by him without further refinement or addition beyond the scope of this project."

Virginia Knauer, OCA Director, has reconvened the **Interagency Committee on Product Information**, which represents 22 Federal agencies, to study the report and make specific recommendations on the cost and feasibility of using the Natick approach for implementing the release of government product information of potential use to consumers.

Phosphates are safer than substitutes in detergents

Three Federal agencies—**Council on Environmental Quality**, **Environmental Protection Agency** and **Health, Education & Welfare Dept.**—have urged the public to use phosphate detergents although they cause water pollution in some parts of the country. The agencies reported that detergents with phosphate substitutes are potentially more of a health hazard than phosphate products are a danger to the environment. The agencies said:

- The health hazards of increasing use of highly caustic substitutes for phosphates in laundry detergents is a cause for serious concern. Certain of the non-phosphate detergents now on the market contain ingredients that may be extremely harmful to children and adults if the product is swallowed, if it comes in contact with eyes or if fumes are inhaled;

- Nitritotriacetic acid (known as NTA) should not be used in detergents at this time because of unresolved questions about possible long-term effects on health and/or environment.

Conference about dating of food products

A conference on "Food Stability & Open Dating" will meet Oct. 21-22 in New Brunswick, N.J. Rutgers University's Food Science Dept. is sponsoring the public conference with assistance of **Agriculture Dept.'s Economic Research Service** and **Office of Consumer Affairs**. The conference is for industrial, legislative, governmental and consumer groups to review, debate and exchange ideas and information on the need for and the operation of open dating of food products. Preregistration is required: send to Dr. N. D. Pintauro, Food Science Dept., P.O. Box 231, CAES, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903. Registration fee of \$25 (which does not include lodging, breakfast or dinner) should be made payable to Rutgers University and enclosed with registration notification.

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